DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 299 062 RC 016 642

AUTHOR Rogers, Robert G.; And Others
TITLE Is School District Reorganization Necessary? A Study of 34 Small Illinois School Districts.
PUB DATE Jan 86
NOTE 68p.; First two pages of Appendix C are poorly reproduced. Best copy available.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *High Schools; Rural Schools; *School District Reorganization; *School District Size; *School Effectiveness; *Small Schools; State Boards of Education; State School District Relationship; Statewide Planning
IDENTIFIERS *Illinois

ABSTRACT

This paper contests a 1985 report by the Illinois State Board of Education, which asserted that small schools are inferior and inefficient, that student achievement is significantly related to school size, and that a high school enrollment of 500-1200 students is necessary for a broad choice of academic courses and extracurricular activities. It is maintained that such a view overlooks the strengths of small schools and the deficiencies of large ones, and ignores the impact that proposed school closings have on rural communities. A survey of 34 Illinois high schools with enrollments under 500 showed that they had course offerings far exceeding state mandates and were not inefficient when judged by per capita tuition costs and operating expenses. Their students: (1) performed adequately on standardized tests; (2) had ACT scores higher than the national average; (3) had dropout rates significantly lower than the state average; (4) were capable of completing post high school programs of vocational training and higher education; and (5) had a high rate of participation in extracurricular activities. Clear standards should be set for the evaluation of school districts. Such standards should allow districts that meet state requirements to exercise local control over organizational patterns and size. The state aid formula should focus on providing adequate funding for education, not on encouraging consolidation. Eleven statistical tables and graphs are provided, and appendixes include discussions of scores on the ACT and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, and brief synopses of 18 related studies. (SV)

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IS SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION NECESSARY?

A STUDY OF 34 SMALL ILLINOIS SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

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PREFACE

School district reorganization or consolidation has become the hottest issue legislatively in the 1980's. Many factors have contributed to this issue.

The Illinois State Board of Education, the newly appointed State Superintendent of Education and the Illinois General Assembly support this idea of reorganization. I believe the General Assembly has been "sold a bill of goods." They believe that reorganization of school districts will be the panacea for all educational problems.

However, there are opponents to the idea of reorganization. This paper is written in opposition to MANDATED consolidation. To force school consolidation just to reduce the number of schools in Illinois is a crime--an injustice to the entire educational community. If consolidation creates a better learning atmosphere and produces a more improved school system, it should be considered.

I would like to thank several individuals for supporting this project. Mr. Scott Jones of Industry, Illinois, Mr. Scott Mayer, Superintendent of Waverly School District, Mr. Michael Gray, Superintendent of Franklin School District and Mr. Robert Rigney, Director, Western Illinois Computer Consortium. These individuals assisted in writing the paper. Also, thanks to Mr. Dennis White, Superintendent of Millstadt Elementary School District for supporting this project with a brief synopsis of selected research on school district size and consolidation.

And to the school districts and Superintendents who participated in this study, your support is greatly appreciated. A special thank you to Mr. Scott Jones who wrote the INTRODUCTION. It should be noted that Mr. Jones is a concerned parent, not a school administrator. He is a farmer who is a product of the small school and a graduate of Eureka College. Thank you for a job well done.

I hope that people across this great state will speak out on the issue of MANDATED CONSOLIDATION.

Sincerely

Robert G. Rogers

Robert G. Rogers

OVERVIEW

In May of 1985, the Illinois State Board of Education released a report entitled School District Organization in Illinois. In this Report Summary, it states "...that in the hundreds of very small high schools in Illinois, students are suffering a significant loss in opportunity to learn when the courses available to them are compared with those available to students in high schools with enrollments of over 500 pupils. Opportunities to take advanced mathematics, foreign languages, and even remedial courses are significantly lower in such small schools and are widely available in schools enrolling up to 1000 students. Such lack of opportunity is particularly significant when one realizes that the results of achievement measures indicate significantly lower scores in smaller schools and analysis indicates that a student's achievement is directly related to the size of the high school he or she attends."

With this statement in mind, a survey was developed and mailed to school districts who had high school enrollments under 500 . These schools were randomly selected from a list of Illinois Public Schools. Assisting Robert Rogers with this survey is Robert E. Rigney, Director, Western Illinois Computer Consortium, Michael Gray, Superintendent, Franklin Community Unit No.1 and Scott Mayer, Superintendent, Waverly Community No.6.

Fifty-three (53) questionnaires were mailed to school districts with high schools under 500 enrollment. Thirty-four (34) questionnaires (64%) were returned.

Many superintendents of the Two Rivers Division of the Illinois Association of School Administrators support this report. Those districts which participated are listed in the appendix. Also, information has been collected from other school district superintendents and is contained in this report.

We would like to thank those district superintendents who particpated in this survey. Without you, this report is not possible. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

This report is not intended to refute the quality of education being taught in larger districts. We know of many large school districts which do an excellent job of educating students. Likewise, we also know of many small school districts which are doing an excellent job of educating students. The primary purpose of this report is to challenge

the report published by the Illinois State Board of Education.

Unlike many reports, we provide some recommendations. They are found in the Summary and Conclusion Chapter.

Sincerely,

Robert Rogers Robert Rigney Scott Mayer Michael Gray

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The history of Illinois is one of pronounced diversity. Population distribution varies from remote rural communities to vast urban centers. The economy ranges from Caterpillar Tractor Company to the family farm. Cultural differences vary dramatically from region to region, with each city, each town and each village having its own unique identity. The educational system of Illinois has evolved within this society to accommodate these wide cultural, social, economic and demographic differences.

Metropolitan areas, having large educational centers with vast course offerings and with a wide array of extra curricular activities, offer excellent educational opportunities, but these large centers are noticeably deficient in nurturing the development of the individual. Limited participation in extra-curricular activities, lack of teacher-student contact and the absence of a feeling of "belonging"--all of these retard character development. Children tend to become numbers instead of individuals.

In contrast, rural areas, having small schools with basic educational offerings and limited extra-curricular activites, provide a solid educational opportunity in addition to promoting the development of a student's identity. Unlimited extra-curricular participation, unobstructed pupil-teacher contact, and a true sense of belonging all enhance the self-image of any student. Children do not become numbers, for they are active participants in an intimate, personal, educational experience. In short, schools become products of the existing environment.

After eighty years of school district evolution, the State Board of Education, in a study released in May, 1985, concluded that Illinois has too many schools and that over half of these should be closed. Schools can no longer afford, both educationally and financially, to reflect the uniqueness and individual characteristics of their communities. The State Board contends that small schools are not only inferior but also inefficient. The Board, stating that to reach an optimal learning environment (critical mass theory in education), believes the high school should have an enrollment range of 500 to 1250 (grades nine through twelve) or a combined unit district enrollment (kindergarten through

grade twelve) of 1500 children. The study asserts that educational opportunities are improved when critical mass is attained and that any variation (larger or smaller) from this optimum range significantly impedes student performance. Small schools lack adequate curricula and require too many teacher preparations. However, there is no explanation given for student deficiencies in large schools.

Another dominant theme throughout the report and one given as an important impetus for school consolidation is streamlining state aid formulation. Improved distribution of money is supposed to assure educational quality; yet, again, the linkage between the two is blatantly lacking.

What are the facts about school size and student performance? The State Board's report, along with numerous other studies, shows conslusively that large schools are educationally inferior. Yet there is no discussion of these deficiencies of or remedies for them--that is down sizing large schools to achieve optimal enrollment. Evidently bigger is better regardless of the facts when political ends are served, even in the education of our children. Obviously both urban and rural students are not important in Illinois. The state proposes to maintain, by omission, inferior education for students in urban areas while destroying, by design, a highly successful system of instruction in rural areas. This indeed is, in my opinion, an educational step backward. What do you think?

The report also claims that student performance is influenced significantly by two factors which are referred to as student and school factors. Student factors mentioned are motivation, parental influence, values, educational exposure/opportunities and expectations/standards; these factors influence student achievement by as much as thirty-three percent, with expectations/standards being the most important. School factors such as course offerings, geographic location, community type, social-economic status and school size are said to contribute as much as twenty percent toward student performance, with school size being the major factor. While school size is only one of four school factors, which are of secondary importance in comparison to student factors, the significance assigned to it by the State Board is highly questionable. Can school reorganization significantly influence student performance when it contributes less than twenty percent toward educational achievement? The question must be asked: Is educational quality really enhanced through school consolidation?

The assertion that the performance of students from small schools is inferior becomes

highly questionable at best with an objective assessment of the facts. With a combined data base of ninety-three years, Dr. A. N. Hieronymous and Dr. Robert Forsyth, both members of the faculty at the University of Iowa, have not been able to find any evidence of inferior education in the small school setting. Dr. Ted Sanders, the Illinois Superintendent of Schools, admitted publicly that no other study can be found to support this critical mass theory. Numerous doctoral dissertations, along with positions assumed by the states of New York, Montana, California and Nebraska, conclude that support for an optimum enrollment requirement in primary and secondary schools does not exist. Even the state of Pennsylvania, which the Illinois report cited as an example of improved education through consolidation, cannot find any data to prove that small schools are inferior. Student performance has not and cannot be linked to school enrollment.

Considering the topic of teacher preparations, there is no question that teachers in small schools do have more preparations, averaging over three per day. But which is educationally more beneficial, four preparations and fifty papers or two preparations with one-hundred fifty papers? If the instructor is to adequately evaluate the performance of the student, would not fifty papers be easier to grade than one-hundred fifty? Thus the teacher with fewer papers is able to spend more time evaluating each student, time which eventually means better education for those involved. One interesting benefit of increased teacher attention is that the average student benefits the most, allowing him to better realize his potential. Becoming a number and being lost in "the shuffle" is a distinct disadvantage of the large school. Such a situation is not found in the small school setting. The loser becomes the average student, and this is called "economies of size"!

Curriculum is an area which demands constant attention because it is basic to any educational process. As technology opens new vistas for man, so should the school curriculum hold open the door of opportunity for children. But how important are exotic courses when there are students who are functionally illiterate? A large menu does not necessarily insure a quality meal any more than a large curriculum guarantees quality education. Even President Ronald Reagan's Commission on Education stressed a "back to basics" approach in curriculum development. Improvement of course offerings should be a priority, but closing schools and bussing children to the course is hardly an innovation or an improvement. Creative education policy should find ways of working with and improving the existing system.

Athough extra-curricular activities are, and rightly so, of secondary importance, there is no doubt that they do add to the character-building process found in modern education. Again, small schools lack the depth of activities, but they do offer the opportunity to participate for those who are of average ability. In a small school students who are not gifted in theater can be in the class play; in a large school, auditions are limited to those gifted in acting. Likewise in sports: average athletes are given the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of participating in interscholastic athletics in the small school; but, again, they are denied the chance of participation in large schools. If school consolidation occurs as Dr. Sanders desires, there will be five thousand fewer basketball players, eight thousand fewer baseball players, eleven thousand fewer thespians, eleven thousand fewer musicians, and the list goes on and on. Are the interests of our rural and small town children best served with school consolidation?

Another problem not addressed in the report is the dropout rate of our high school students. Twenty-five percent of students in the state do not receive a high school diploma, according to the statistical average. Yet less than five percent drop out of small schools. How do we explain to the twenty percent of students who will not finish their education, because of consolidation, that this is educational reform? Is this improved educational opportunity? Not to me; is it to you?

Finally, should school funding simplification be justification for changing the school district makeup of our state? Is the elimination of fifty-five percent of our school districts a reasonable trade-off in order to make life easier in Springfield? Our community disagrees. What is the opinion of your community? Yet Ted Sanders and the State Board persist in their quest of closing our schools. It is easy to look at reams of test scores, statistics, and just one study to justify massive consolidation. To me this information only removes the human element from the issue. Consolidation is a human issue, and the State Board cannot ignore this fact.

Student stress, resulting from the following causes, will likely increase the dropout rate and promote alienation towards the educational process. When a student who "belonged" in a small school is thrust into the environment of numbers in a large school, the impact could be devastating. The negative effects of prolonged bussing, which are well documented, would be physically limiting to quality education. How long does it take the new school to assimilate those coming from the other town or towns? Incoming student segregation by the existing student body is a definite risk, but this issue again

was not addressed by the Illinois report. Losing the open door policy for access to teachers, administrators, etc. could also adversely affect the new student. In short, the incoming student would have to make dramatic adjustments just to survive, let alone excel in the new school.

What about the community that loses its school? Granted, education is the primary concern of the local school, but to totally ignore the impact on the surrounding area is short-sighted at best. What about the responsibility of the state to those left behind? In removing the school from the community, the economic, social, and cultural ramifications would be devastating. The school is usually the largest employer, the largest depositor in the local bank, a source of trade for local businesses and the social-cultural center for the community. Population retention, economic development both present and future, maintenance of the tax base and continuation of public services are all essential in any community; yet they too would be jeopardized with the loss of the local school. Now, what about the loss of those intangible benefits associated with the professionals who are members of the staff at the school? Summer leagues would lose organizational help; cultural events such as plays and concerts would no longer take place; local governments and service clubs would lose valuable members. Simply stated, the community would eventually cease to function. What happens in the city when a neighborhood school is closed? Usually the area experiences both social and cultural decline, losing its identity in the process, until the quality of life is destroyed. Likewise, the quality of life in a rural community, without its school, would decline as well. This would have negative effects state-wide with the loss of jobs, population shifts, and decline of our rural social base. Illinois would have some large adjustments to make in a very short time. Is school consolidation worth the risk?

How can Illinois be spared this unnecessary turmoil and refocus its attention on quality education? First and foremost, quality education has to be the top priority in our state to insure our continuing leadership in the cultural, social, economic and educational affairs of the nation. In the Educational Reform Package of 1985, the Legislature furnished a way to achieve these ends. A School District Report Card is required by all districts in the state. Such a card, to be published yearly, will provide specific, technical information for examination and evaluation by parents, the Illinois State Board of Education and the State Legislature. This information will establish a uniform base of data that can be used for school district evaluation. A set of state-wide standards should be established to assess performance of both large and small schools, in order that

objective decisions be made in program evaluation. With quality being the basis, all programs regardless of size should have to meet these standards in order to retain accreditation. If deficiencies are found, then recommendations can be made to improve the program in question, with consolidation or down sizing as a remedy of last resort. As long as the district, regardless of size, is meeting the set criteria, it should be unlawful to reorganize that district either by direct mandate or through imposed state funding restrictions.

The diversity of Illinois is surpassed only by the quality of life experienced by those who live within its boundaries. Our diversity and quality of life are two key reasons for the history of success associated with Illinois; there is found a common denominator in both, this denominator being our schools. The schools have a unique relationship with this diversity--quality of life scheme which is one of interdependence and mutual influence. The schools are the products of our diversity and yet contribute significantly to sustaining this great variation. A prime reason for the quality of life found in Illinois is the influence of the local school, while in turn the community shapes and influences the educational environment found in that school. The schools and the state are dependent on each other for survival, and to contribute to the demise of one would be to insure the destruction of the other.

Opposition is not being expressed toward all school consolidation per se but toward arbitrary consolidation and the critical mass theory found in education. As a child's education begins at home in the pre-school years, so should the issue of school reorganization begin at home in the local level. This local level is the place wher school reorganization is of paramount importance and where it is best understood. The local school is an integral part of its community; thus its future should be determined by those who depend on it to the greatest extent--the local citizenry. An infringement on the right of community control over <u>any</u> local taxing body is contrary to our basic beliefs as citizens of Illinois and of the United States. Local control is as basic as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Local, state, and national interests are best served by a well-educated populace, and no one is more aware of this fact than those who live in rural Illinois. But the awareness does not stop there, for it continues in the form of demanding quality education for all. When these ends are not met, the concerned community is the first to know and the first to act. Local control for our schools is essential, for it is our right.

As Illinois cannot survive without its cities, towns and villages, they in turn cannot survive without their schools. Once this unique system of schools is dismantled, such a system can never be rebuilt. We realize that choosing to send children to small rural schools involves educational trade-offs, but so does sending children to a large school. Both types of schools have their strengths and weaknesses, with neither having a clear advantage; therefore our choice of school size depends on what we as parents value in life. And so we return to the diversity spoken of earlier--cultural, social, economic and demographic--with each individual to his own choice. Take a school from an urban neighborhood and you insure urban decay. Take the school from a rural community and you guarantee its death.

My plea to you is: PLEASE SAVE RURAL ILLINOIS

PLEASE SAVE OUR SCHOOLS

Scott Jones
Industry, Illinois

CHAPTER II

SIZE VERSUS AREA

Information for this section is drawn from Table I. The range in number of pupils in a district is fifty-five (55) to two thousand two hundred twelve (2212). The range in district square miles is thirty-two (32) to three hundred seventy-seven (377). The median number of students is three hundren ninety-four (394) with a mean average of five hundred seventy-seven and twenty-three hundredths (577.23).

The median square miles of a district is ninety-nine (99) with a mean average of one hundred twenty-one and three tenths (121.3). The range of pupils per square mile is eighty-five hundredths (.85) to twenty four and seven tenths (24.7). The median of pupils per square mile is four and eleven hundredths (4.11) with the mean average of five and twenty-six hundredths (5.26).

Several conclusions may be drawn from this data. One is the uniqueness of size and density of the districts participating in this study. The reader can easily determine what a district's size in square miles would need to be in meeting state minimums of pupil enrollment (K through 12 unit district of 1500; high school district of 500; elementary district of 1000 students). It would appear to the author that the Illinois State Board of Education would find it difficult to make blanket statements that are correct for all districts.

It appears difficult to draw conclusions from this data as to the efficiency of a district's transportation program. One would need to know the number of students and the number of bus routes in each district.

The authors believe that each case of consolidation, as far as square miles and numbers of students is concerned, will have to be considered each on its own merits or lack of such merits.

TABLE 1.0

DISTRICT	NO. PUPILS	AREA (SQ. MILES)	PUPILS/SQ MILE
Perry	55	65	.85
Saunemin	186	85.75	2.17
Brussels	174	64	2.72
Easton	230	114	2.02
Divernon	267	32	8.34
Allendale	258	40	6.45
Kansas	307	98	3.13
Bluffs	309	73.5	4.20
Chadwick	248	56.3	4.40
Gridley	394	52	7.58
Stonington	313	66.6	4.70
Findley	326	81	4.02
Ashland	335	82.2	4.08
Franklin	424	134	3.16
Barry	394	99.5	3.96
Meredosia	373	80	4.66
West Pike	393	130	3.02
Griggsville	377	75	5.03
Pleasant Hill	420	135	3.11
Waverly	435	100	4.35
Triopia	453	130	3.48
Palestine	535	80	6.68
Cowden	180	108	1.67
Greenfield	581	180	3.23
Liberty	689	154	4.47
Oblong	811	164.2	4.94
Camp Point	904	227	3.98
Mendon	904	220	4.11
Carrollton	737	185	3.98
Neoga	873	110	7.94
Virden	1086	72.1	15.06
North Greene	1357	176	7.71
Schuyler	1280	333.2	3.84
Beardstown	1333	90.7	14.70
Olympia	2212	377	5.87

TABLE 1.1

LIST OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

SCHOOL DISTRICT	HIGH SCHOOL	ENROLLMENT	COUNTY
Perry District No. 172	Perry High School	55	Pike
Saunemin District No. 6	Saunemin High School	64	Livingston
Brussels District No. 37	Brussels High School	73	Calhoun
Easton District No. 121	Easton High School	74	Mason
Divernon District No. 13	Divernon High School	80	Sangamon
Allendale District No. 17	Allendale High School	84	Wabash
Kansas District No. 3	Kansas High School	87	Edgar
Scott-Morgan District No. 2	Bluffs High School	89	Scott
Chadwick District No. 399	Chadwick High School	93	Carroll
Gridley District No.10	Gridley High School	94	MC Lean
Stonington District No. 7	Stonington High School	95	Christian
Findlay District No. 2	Findlay High School	104	Shelby
Ashland District No. 212	Ashland High School	108	Cass
Franklin District No. 1	Franklin High School	118	Morgan
Barry District No. 1	Barry High School	121	Pike
Meredosia-Chambersburg No.11	Meredosia High School	122	Morgan
West Pike District No.2	West Pike High School	133	Pike
Griggsville District No.4	Griggsville High School	136	Pike
Pleasant Hill District No.3	Pleasant Hill High School	141	Pike
Waverly District No. 6	Waverly High School	157	Morgan
Triopia District No. 27	Triopia High School	163	Morgan
Palestine District No. 3	Palestine High School	172	Crawford
Cowden-Herrick District 188	Cowden-Herrick High School	180	Shelby
Greenfield District No. 10	Greenfield High School	181	Greene
Liberty District No. 2	Liberty High School	205	Adams
Oblong District No. 4	Oblong High School	227	Crawford
Camp Point District No. 3	Central High School	263	Adams
Mendon District No. 4	Unity High School	263	Adams
Carrollton District No. 1	Carrollton High School	279	Greene
Virden District No. 4	Virden High School	290	Macoupin
Neoga District No. 3	Neoga High School	300	Cumberland
North Greene District No. 3	North Greene High School	406	Greene
Schuyler District No. 1	Rushville High School	436	Schuyler
Beardstown District No. 15	Beardstown High School	484	Cass

CHAPTER III

WILL MANDATED CONSOLIDATION INCREASE SCHOOL DISTRICT EFFICIENCY?

Proponents of mandated school consolidation advance the argument that consolidation will save money. Efficiency will increase and per pupil costs, as well as operating tax rates, will fall. A look at some facts may prove otherwise.

If one examines the operating expense per pupil of the 34 Central Illinois districts which participated in this survey, the average expense per pupil is $2972. The per capita tuition charge, which eliminates federal money, state categorical programs, and local user fees, averages $2585 per student. These figures are taken directly from the annual audit of each school district, Illinois State Board of Education form 50-35.

Compare these costs to the Olympia District, centered in McLean County and including parts of four other counties. Olympia, which is a consolidation of eight small towns dating back to 1972, shows an operating expense of $3318 per pupil, 11.6% in excess of the average of the 34 small (inefficient?) districts. The per capita tuition cost for Olympia is $3042, 17.7% higher than the average of the 34 small districts. Where is the increased economy and efficiency per pupil which we hear so much about? Certainly, if there is a district in the central part of the state which could serve as a model of the desires of the State Board in Central Illinois, it would be Olympia, with it's 377 square miles and 2212 students (K-12). Olympia also has a tax rate of $4.0713 per $100 of equalized assessed valuation. Despite this exorbitant rate, their financial situation dictated a rate referendum in February of 1985 which was defeated by a 4-1 majority, despite a lack of organized opposition. Perhaps it would be wise to examine several points before jumping to the conclusion that consolidation is desirable for merely increased efficiency.

1. Will the new district have to put up a new building? If so, where will it be located? If so, where will the money come from? Will the state pick up the tab for all of the building which may be necessary? If so, which other areas of funding will suffer?

2. What about the future of existing building sites? Each town will probably want to

maintain a grade school. If this happens, how will the Board of Education justify spending large amounts of money for one school, but not the others? The point to remember is that taxpayers are much more willing to put their money into a school that is THEIRS than they are to put their money into somebody else's school.

3. What will the transportation costs of the new district be? In most rural areas in Central Illinois, they will rise dramatically.

4. One of the reasons given for local districts to consolidate is state incentives. The costs of increased teacher salaries and assumption of existing debt, currently promised to consolidating districts, would be enormous if all districts were to reach the magic number of 1500 students. One might wonder if these funds might be spent in a more productive manner, such as fully funding mandated programs and categorical programs or increasing the general state aid appropriation.

5. While it is true that there will be fewer line administrators with a consolidated district, there will be additional staff administrators. True, there will be one superintendent, where before there were three or four. However, there will be assistant superintendents for business, personnel, and curriculum.

Before jumping on the consolidation bandwagon on the assumption of increased efficiency and lower costs, one should carefully analyze the situation from both a local AND a state perspective. The savings may not be what some would have us believe.

CHAPTER IV

CURRICULUM

Public education in America is not geared toward the elite minority. Schools are charged with providing an appropriate education for all children regardless of race, creed, color or handicap.

The enrollment of the districts responding to the survey ranged from 55 to 1357 students. It should be noted that the 55 enrollment was one of three dual districts reporting. This is the high school enrollment only. These 34 districts were sorted into three groups according to high school size. Group I ranged from 55 to 95. Eleven schools are included in this section. Group II ranged from 100 to 179 enrollment. Again, eleven schools are reported. Group III high school size ranged from 180 to 484. This Group represents the largest population. Twelve schools are included in this section. All three groups are under the 500 limit in size that is required by Senate Bill 730.

This section of the report will look at the courses offered, credits offered, and percentage of students enrolled in various subjects of mathematics, science, English and social studies. This will be reported by Groups. The term "unit" used in this report is synonymous with year. One year is equal to one unit of credit.

In Group I, all eleven schools reported offering at least four units of English, Science and Mathematics. In English, 6 schools offer 4 units, 1 school 4.5 units, 2 schools 5 units, 1 school 7 units and 1 school 10 units.

The Science curriculum also varies with 7 schools offering 4 units, 1 school 5 units, and the remaining three schools 6 units.

In Mathematics, 5 schools offer 4 units, 3 schools offer 5 units, 1 school 5.5 units, 1 school 6 units and 1 school 10 units.

All but one school reported offering courses in Social Science, Foreign Language, Computer Education, Music, Art, and Vocational Education. The number of units vary for

each subject. One school did not respond to the Art question, therefore, the author assumes no Art is offered.

The number of units available in Art varied from 1 to three. Five schools reported offering at least 2 units, and 2 schools offer 3 units.

The music curricula also varies from school to school. Two schools reported offering 1 unit while the others range from 2 to 4 units. Seven districts reported offering more than 3 units of music.

All schools offer at least 1 unit of Foreign Language. One school, the smallest, reported offering two units of French and 2 units of Latin. Two schools reported offering only 1 year of Foreign Language (18%). The remaining schools, (82%) offer from 2 to 4 years.

Most schools offer a number of Vocational Education units of credit. The highest number offered was 45 units. The lowest was 2 units.

Districts were asked to report the percentage of students enrolled in an English, Mathematics, Science or Social Science course for the 1985 school year. One district failed to respond to this question. Three schools reported that all (100%) of their high school students were enrolled in an English course. The lowest response was 91%. The mean average enrollment in English was 94%.

In Science, four districts reported at least 50% of their high school students were enrolled in a Science class. One district report 81% enrollment. The mean average percentage was 60.

The Mathematics enrollment ranged from 48% to 100%. The mean average enrollment was 66%.

The average for Social Science was lower. The highest percentage reported was 64. The lowest was 44%. The mean average enrollment was 58%.

Group II, high schools from 100 to 179 enrollment, reported that all eleven schools offer at least 4 units in English and Mathematics. Six schools offer 4 units of English.

One school 4.5 units, three schools reported 5 units and one school offers 6 units. One school reported only 4 units of Mathematics is available for students. Four districts offer 5 units and six offer 6 units.

The range of units offered for Science vary from 3 to 8. Six districts offer 5 units while one district offers 8 units.

In Social Science, one school reported offering 2 units of credit. The highest number of units offered is 4.5. One school reported 2.5 units, one school 3 units, two schools 3.5 units, four schools 4 units and 1 school 4.5 units.

All schools in Group II offer at least 2 years of Foreign Language. Two schools offer 4 units, one school 3 units and the remaining eight schools offer 2 units.

The number of units offered in Art and Music varies from school to school. One school reported offering only a semester of Art while four schools reported offering 4 units of Art. The number of units in Music range from 1 to 21. One school reported only 1 unit of credit. Two schools offer 2 units, two schools 2.5 units, one school reported 3 units, and one school offers 4, 5, 6, 8 and 21 units individually.

The lowest number of Vocational units offered is 4. The other ten schools in Group II offer 11 units or more. The highest number of vocational units offered by an individual school is 20.5

The number of students enrolled in an English class ranged from 80% to 100%. Three schools reported that all of their students were enrolled in an English class. Other schools reported 80%, 81%, 88%, 90%, 91%, two schools show 93%, and one school 94%. The mean average percentage for English in Group II is 93.

In Science, the percentages of enrollment were from 38 to 79. Three schools reported percentages in the 40's. Other percentages were 56, 64, 67, 72, 74, 77, and 79. The mean average percentage in Science is 64.

The number of students enrolled in Mathematics in Group II range from 40% to 85%. After 40%, the next lowest was 45%. Others schools reported enrollment percentages as 57, 60, 61, 65, 67, 69, 70, 76 and 85. The mean average percentage for Mathematics is

65.

In Social Studies, Group II reported a low percentage of 47 and two schools had an average of 80. The mean average percentage for Social Studies is 64.

Group III represents the largest number of school districts surveyed. Twelve (12) districts responded. Like Group I, all schools in Group III reported at least four units in English, Science and Mathematics are offered.

Of the twelve schools, six schools offer at least 4 units of English, two schools provide 5 units for students, two schools 6 units, one school 8 units and the last school 11 units.

In Mathematics, two schools offer 4 units of credit. This is the least number offered by Group III schools. Three schools offer 5 units, three schools 6 units, one school 6.5 units, two schools 7 units and one school 8 units.

In Science, 3 units is the least amount offered. One school offers 10 units. Five schools offer between 4 and 5 units, two schools 5 units, three schools at least 6 units, and two schools 7 units.

All twelve schools offer units of credit in Vocational subjects, Music and Art. Again, the Vocational area seems to have the most offerings. One school offers only 2 units while another offers 31 units.

Two schools offer 4 units of Foreign Language. One school offers 8 units and the remaining nine schools offer 2 units.

Seven schools offer 4 or more units of Art. One school offers only 1 year. The remaining schools offer 2 to 3 units.

At least 1 unit is offered by all Group III schools in Music. Six schools offer 4 units of credit.

When reporting the percentage of students enrolled in English, Science, Mathematics and Social Science courses, Group III seem to be on line with the other two groups. For

example, the highest percentage in Mathematics was 85. The lowest was 47%. The mean average in Mathematics is 69%.

In English, Group III has a 92% mean average. Two schools reported that all students enrolled in high school (100%) were taking an English related class. The lowest percentage listed was 78.

The highest percentage listed in Science was 80. The lowest 50%. The mean average in Science is 62%.

The lowest percentage reported for Social Science was 30. The highest is 80 %.

Schools were asked to list the areas where remedial help is available to students. Twenty-six of the 34 schools reported offering the availability of remedial instructions to students. The area receiving the most attention concerning remedial instruction is English. Twenty-five schools offer remedial English programs. Mathematics is the next subject to receive the most attention. Twenty-two schools offer remedial instruction to high school students.

Schools in Group II (100 to 179 enrollment) seem to make remedial instruction more available to their students. All eleven schools offer some type of remedial instruction.

Schools in Group I (under 100 students) have fewer remedial courses available. Maybe with smaller class size, teachers might have the time to provide "extra time" to those students who need it? Six of the eleven schools provide some remedial course of instruction.

Ten of twelve schools in Group III (180 to 484 enrollment) offer remedial instruction to students.

Eleven of the thirty-four schools offer remedial instruction in Science, Social Science, Reading, Language, English and Mathematics.

CHAPTER V

PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO

The pupil-teacher ratio between Group I, II, and III Schools varies from nine students to one teacher (9:1) to twenty-five students to one teacher (25:1).

Group I Schools (under 100 enrollment) range from nine students to one teacher (9:1) to seventeen students to one teacher (17:1).

Schools in Group II (100 to 179 enrollment) range from twelve students to one teacher (12:1) to twenty students to one teacher (20:1).

Group III Schools (180 to 484 enrollment) range from thirteen students to one teacher (13:1) to twenty-five students to one teacher (25:1).

The teacher-pupil ratio is determined by taking the number of students enrolled times the number of classes offered each period. The total number of students divided by the number of classes results in the pupil-teacher ratio. For example, a high school has 81 students enrolled in a 7 period day. There are 55 courses offered during the seven periods. Computation would be 81 x 7 = 567 divided by 55 = 10.3 per pupil-teacher ratio (10.3:1).

Public school pupil-teacher ratios determined by the Illinois State Board of Education from 1982 to 1985 are as follows:

SCHOOL YEAR	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1982	21.3	18.8
1983	21.3	18.2
1984	21.5	18.4
1985	21.1	18.3

CHAPTER VI

DROPOUT STATISTICS

Of the 34 reporting school districts, nine (9) high schools did not have a student drop out of school during the 1984-85 school year. Seven (7) high schools reported 1 student dropping out. Four (4) high schools reported that two students dropped out.

The range in dropouts in the thirty-four (34) schools reporting is from zero (0) to thirty-five (35) for the 1984-85 school year. The mean average is 4.29 students. The median dropout rate is two (2).

The 1984-85 dropout rate of the 34 reporting schools was 2.4 percent. The state wide average for the same year was not available at the time of this report. However, according to the Illinois State Board of Education, the state wide average for the 1983-84 school year was 4.9 percent.

Truancy does not seem to be a problem with a majority of the small schools participating in this survey. Many schools indicate their Average Daily Attendance (ADA) to be over 95 percent district wide.

CHAPTER VII

POST HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION

Twenty-nine (29) of the schools participated in this section of the survey. Of the 318 high school graduates who entered a four year college, two hundred thirty-three (233) completed school and earned their degree. Thus, 73.27 percent of students entering a four year college from these small schools are graduating.

Twenty-eight (28) districts sent 176 graduates to a community college. One hundred seventeen (117) finished their two years at these colleges. This equates to 66.48 percent.

The figures above were taken from a follow-up study of 1981 high school graduates. The schools in this survey graduated 1,312 students. Of these students, 1,120 either entered a college or university, joined the armed service, entered vocational training or the work force. Therefore, 85.37 percent of the graduates left high school employable in the work force, acceptable in the armed service and higher education.

Some of the students who entered community colleges completed their requirements for a two year degree and entered a four year college or university. See the Appendix for graphic display of 1981 high school and 1985 college graduates. These are identified by Group I (under 100 enrollment), Group II (100 to 179 enrollment), and by Group III (180 to 484 enrollment). These Groups are identified by high school enrollment only.

The results of the study show that students from small schools are accepted by institutions of higher learning. Also, results indicate that students from small schools have the ability to complete the desired training, degree, or program.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions we reach from this study are the following:

1. The 34 schools in the study have course offerings that far exceed State Mandates. Not only do small schools seem to offer adequate course offerings, they also offer more than adequate remedial help for the slower student who may be ignored in larger schools.

2. A high percentage of students are enrolled in challenging academic classes.

3. Small schools are not necessarily inefficient, when judged by per capita tuition costs and operating expenses per pupil.

4. A large percentage of students from small schools who go on to four year colleges or universities graduate. Of the students who do not go on to college, the overwhelming majority leave school with a definite plan of direction. Approximately 15% did not enter the work force, armed services or continue their education.

5. Small schools have a drop out rate which is significantly lower than the state average.

6. A high percentage of students are able to particpate in extra curricular activites in small schools.

7. Students from small schools perform adequately on standardized tests.

8. There is no correlation between the size of the school district (area in square miles) and the student population (enrollment). It would be difficult for many rural school districts to consolidate and maintain the existing boundaries.

9. The five year ACT average score of 32 schools reporting was higher than the National average of the 1984-85 ACT Composit score.

10. A majority of high schools in this study (79.4%) have a per pupil-teacher ratio lower than the 1985 state average.

11. The standardized tests used in measuring student achievement varies among the 34 participating districts.

By any standard, small schools seem to be meeting the needs of their students. If the State Board of Education wishes to pay more than lip service to the notion of local control, they should not force consolidation (whether by legislation or "financial incentives").

After tabulating and analyzing the data from the 34 participating districts, the authors make the following recommendations:

1. **Evaluate each individual school district to determine the quality of education available.** This recommendation is supported by A. N. Hieronymus, Director, Iowa Basic Skills Testing Program, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. (See Appendix for letter). According to Dr. Hieronymus, "...Apparently, it is not size as such that makes the difference (relationship to school district size and achievement in the basic skills in Iowa) but the quality of the program in schools of any size.

Dr. William B. McMillan, Director, Minnesota State Assessment Program, also supports this view. In a letter to Mr. Scott Jones, Dr. McMillan writes, " We have not been able to confirm that size of district alone is the critical factor in scores on our tests. As a matter of fact, small districts generally perform quite well on our tests and show various strengths and weaknesses - as do districts in other strata."

2 .**The Illinois State Board of Education must set clear programmatic standards by which school districts are evaluated.** The Minnesota Department of Education recently passed a rule that provides a minimum comprehensive program of courses for all students regardless of district size. Minnesota has returned to the number of clock hours per credit. Illinois should give consideration to returning to this requirement.

The following are the mandated requirements for high schools in the State of Illinois. These requirements cover a wide range of areas. From basic standards (schedules) to

Thou Shalls...(teaching assignments, inservice programs, attendance, calendar, etc.) to Instruction and Curriculum.

Each high school shall provide a comprehensive curriculum which includes the following **minimum** program offerings: English, 3 units, Science, 1 unit, Mathematics, 2 units (one credit can be earned in computer related mathematics instruction), Social Science, 2 units (one must be earned in U.S. History and/or Government), and 1 unit selected from either Foreign Language, Music, Art or Vocational Education, 1 semester, .5 credit of Health, 1 semester, .5 of Consumer Education and Driver and Safety Education. Each student must take physical education daily or have a waiver. Students, according to the State Board of Education, need a minimum of 16 credits to graduate if they are enrolled in a four year high school. Credits are pro-rated for a three year high school. Each unit of credit means one year of study (Carnegie Unit).

3 .**In examining the possibility of reorganization, the State should capitalize on the strengths that are present in the small schools.** Dr. Donald A. Johansen, Supervisor, Secondary Education, Minnesota Department of Education, writes "...Small schools need to be encouraged to overcome their weaknesses and continue to build on their strengths." Jonathan Sher writes in Revitalizing Rural Education: "Much of what is unique about rural schools and school districts defies quantitative analysis or statistical description." Dr. Johansen futher writes, "It is my opinion that there is much agreement that small schools have inherent strengths and any attempt to solve the small school problems should capitalize on these strengths."

4 .**Schools which meet State Requirements should be allowed to exercise local control over organizational patterns and size.** Educational studies indiçate many benefits are found in small schools. Barbara Schneider, writing in "America's Small Schools" found the following to be true: 1. Small school size has a positive influence on student achievement; 2. Students of small schools assume more responsible and important positions within a wider range of activities than do their large school counter parts; 3. There is a greater interaction, communication, and individual attention afforded small school students and teachers.

The philosophy of the Illinois State Board of Education has always supported local control of schools. In fact, the Illinois Program for Evaluation, Supervision, and Recognition of Schools, Document Number 1, as prepared by the State Board of Education

states, "The local board of education possesses authority, as granted by statutes, for the operation of the local school system and has the legal responsibility for making final decisions within the framework of the laws and regulations of the state."

Document Number 1 futher states, "Public education in Illinois has traditionally adhered to the concept of local control of the schools. It is the responsibility of the local school board and the local district citizens to ensure that its educational program is responsive to the needs of their community. Community needs may deviate from, or go beyond, basic needs or optimum goals as delineated by laws and regulations aimed at achieving a quality education for all youngsters in the State of Illinois." Therefore, basically it is the responsibility of the local school board, with direction from the administration, to establish a curriculum that meets the requirements established by the State Board of Education. This curriculum must also be conducive to the attitude and concerns of local citizenry.

Let us continue to live with the above philosophy. Correct what is wrong in education and strengthen what is right.

5. **When the 1987 State Aid Formula is written, it should focus on more adequate funding for education rather than encouraging consolidation.** Every dollar spent for the study of reorganization is a dollar that could be spent on the education of boys and girls enrolled in school districts throughout the State of Illinois. Other financial, incentives such as assumption of debt, and equalization of teacher salaries, cost money which could more wisely be spent for existing programs.

Illinois should look to other states for ideas in developing a state aid formula that adequately provides financial support for all districts. In Minnesota for example, the state foundation aid formula guarantees a minimum level of financial revenue to all districts if they levy a minimum local effort: i.e., $1,690.00 per elementary student and $2,366.00 per year for each secondary student. Districts are also able to vote local discretionary funds to exceed that revenue. Minnesota also provides extra funding for cooperative efforts including transportation costs for cooperation between districts.

In Missouri, the foundation level is fixed at a certain percentage of the average state wide expenditure. This method could be used to distribute funds to districts. Maybe, all districts should be treated as if they were unit districts.

In a memorandum to Ted Sanders, Illinois State Superintendent of Education, Allan Odden, Professor, University of Southern California School of Education, Los Angeles, California sumed it up best when he said, "Illinois is a large and very diverse state...It has a strong tradition of localism. It has both very large and very small school districts, both in numbers of students and square miles covered. This diversity and history of local control produces, for education, very different preferences for education across the state. A sound finance formula needs to deal simultaneously with these realities of diversity, local control and varying preference for education."

APPENDIX A

IOWA TEST OF BASIC SKILLS INFORMATION

The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa 52242

Iowa Testing Programs
334 Lindquist Center

August 27, 1985

Mr. Scott Jones
P.O. Box 59
Industry, IL 61440

Dear Mr. Jones:

The information we discussed when we talked last week is enclosed. The 1983 leaflet provides norms for three school size categories. The 1984 leaflet does not provide these norms. Page 2 of the 1984 leaflet contains my statement explaining why separate norms for school size categories were not provided.

You may find the information in the 1983 leaflet of interest. For example, the grade medians for the composite score are shown below:

	Class Size		
GRADE	A	B	C
9	14.2	14.3	14.1
10	16.0	16.1	15.8
11	17.9	17.7	17.6
12	19.0	19.0	18.8

Although the score scale we use is probably not very meaningful to you (actually, it is highly similar to the ACT standard score scale), some reasonable interpretation of the differences between the different groups of schools can be made by comparing these differences to the grade-to-grade differences. For example, the grade 9 to grade 10 difference is about 1.8 and the maximum difference between the three groups of schools is .2 at grade 9 and .3 at grade 10. (A brief explanation of our score scale is given in Part 4 of the enclosed manual.)

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Forsyth
Director, ITED Program

RAF:lb

Enclosures

The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa 52242

Iowa Testing Programs
334 Lindquist Center

August 30, 1985

Scott Jones
P.O. Box 59
Industry, Illinois 61440

Dear Mr. Jones:

This is in response to your inquiry regarding the research on the relationships between size of school district and achievement in the basic skills in Iowa.

The past year was the 50th anniversary of the Iowa Basic Skills Testing Program. In the early years, we reported separate norms for school averages for schools of different sizes. But sometime around 1960-65 differences in average performance for schools of various sizes became so small that we quit providing differentiated norms.

Just last week we finished an analysis of achievement over the past six years for 433 Iowa schools (out of the 437) of various enrollment sizes as classified in the 1980 census. The achievement index is the average battery composite score, using national NCE's (normal curve equivalents) as the score units. We also obtained a mean index of socioeconomic status (SES) based on an equally weighted combination of median years of education of the population 25 years old and over, and median family income in thousands of dollars.

The results are shown below:

Census Groups	Number of Schools	K-12 Enrollment Range	Average No. Pupils Per Grade	Mean Achievement Index	Mean SES
1	6	10,000-24,999	769 up	57.1	97.0
2	10	5,000- 9,999	385-769	63.2	101.6
3	17	2,500- 4,999	192-385	63.1	98.4
4	64	1,200- 2,499	92-192	63.2	93.8
5	138	600- 1,199	46-92	62.9	93.2
6	198	Below 600	Below 46	62.9	91.6
Totals	433	----	----	62.9	93.0

As you can see, except for the six largest school systems the differences are trivial. The average performance index of the 198 school systems with total enrollment below 600 was 62.9, which was exactly at the state average.

I must point out the achievement within these groups was quite variable. Within Group 6, there were schools at all levels of average achievement. Apparently, it is not size as such that makes the difference but the quality of the program in schools of any size.

If you have further questions, let me know.

Sincerely,

A. N. Hieronymus, Director
Iowa Basic Skills Testing Program

mcw

Basis of the Norms for School Averages

The 1984 norms for averages are based on the 407 systems and 104,666 students that took the Seventh Edition in 1983. These systems were distributed in size as follows:

Enrollment Class	System Enrollemnt Grades 9-12	Number of School Systems	Number of Buildings
A	350 or more	105	146
B	200-349	94	94
C	199 or less	208	208

Tables of Norms

Table 1 summarizes the 1983 data for all size categories combined. Table 2 contains a summary of comparable data derived from the 1978 national standardization program. The national data have been periodically revised (most recently in the spring of 1981) to reflect the downward trend in achievement revealed by the National Assessment Program, ACT, and the College Entrance Examination Board. Since Iowa and national ranks for averages are printed on the Confidential Summary Report, no direct use of Tables 1 and 2 will typically be necessary. The tables are presented here primarily for those who wish to compare Iowa and national norms or approximate the rank for means for special groups.

NOTE: In previous years tables similar to Table 1 were provided for each size category (A, B, and C). However, for the last several years, the norms for these different categories have been highly similar. Thus, it was decided not to publish separate norms this year. However, if a school wishes to obtain normative information for a given size category, the director of the program can supply this information.

Profile Charts and Their Uses

Blank charts are provided for those schools that wish to plot their profiles of average performance. The percentile ranks given on the Confidential Summary Report may be plotted directly, with reference to the percentile scales shown at the sides of the chart. If more than one profile is plotted on a single chart, it is recommended that different colors be used to represent different groups of students.

The major use of the profile chart is to assess outstanding strengths and weaknesses in the achievement of individual classes and the system as a whole. Unsuspected weaknesses which characterize a number of groups and which have persisted over several years may indicate aspects of the school program in need of careful study. Efforts to improve and strengthen a particular area in the curriculum will generally be reflected by higher averages in subsequent years' profiles.

APPENDIX B

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CORRESPONDENCE

Minnesota Department of Education

Capitol Square 550 Cedar Street Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101 Phone:

October 22, 1985

Scott Jones
P.O. Box 59
Industry, Illinois 61440

Dear Mr. Jones:

This letter is written to document our phone conversation of October 21. As I stated at that time, Minnesota's sampling procedures are not done by school. Rather, we report by size and type of district as follows:

1. Cities of the First Class - Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth combined
2. Surburban Districts of Minneapolis and St. Paul.
3. Districts with K-12 enrollment greater than 2,000.
4. Districts with K-12 enrollment from 1000 - 1,999.
5. Districts with K -12 enrollment from 500 - 999.
6. Districts with K -12 enrollment from 1 - 499.

We have not been able to confirm that size of district alone is the critical factor in scores on our tests. As a matter of fact, small districts generally perform quite well on our tests and show various strengths and weaknesses - as do districts in other strata.

An opinion gained from eleven years with state assessment in Minnesota is that there are few unidimensional explanations which can be drawn from test data. The situation in Illinois may reflect a conclusion in search of data. If that is in fact, the case, the measurement community has an obligation to intervene.

It is not clear that the small schools in Minnesota could withstand severe scrutiny relative to scope and depth of learning opportunities. It is also not clear that test scores are adequate to that discussion.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Consequently, I would encourage you to push for a multidimensional view of the topic including student follow up data. I would talk about educational significance. I would call for rationality sprinkled heavily with downstate educational and political support.

Cordially,

William B. McMillan

William B. McMillan, Phd.
Director, Minnesota State
Assessment Program

WBM/ch

Minnesota Department of Education

Capitol Square 550 Cedar Street Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101 Phone (612)296-4055

October 22, 1985

Mr. Scott Jones
PO Box 59
Industry, Illinois 61440

Dear Mr. Jones:

This letter is a confirmation of our telephone conversation on October 21, 1985. On that date we discussed the value of the small school in our statewide system. I mentioned to you that Minnesota is essentially a rural state with one metropolitan area. The 435 K-12 school districts include 131 districts with fewer than 500 students. I continue to be very concerned with quality education for all youngsters in our state and the problems of small schools in particular.

Many people have shown interest in small schools lately as enrollments decline, costs soar, and more is expected of our schools than ever before. E. D. Edington summarizes the concern and support for small schools in his book, Strengthening the Small Rural School, University Park, New Mexico State University, 1976 ERIC/CRESS ED 115 408. Edington suggests that small rural schools have the following weaknesses: (1) poor organizational structure, (2) difficulties in recruitment of quality personnel, (3) inadequate facilities, (4) curriculum deficiencies, and(5) inadequate financial support. Strengths attributed to small schools include: (1) homogeneous socio-cultural background, (2) the potential for a close knit educational organization, (3) close student-teacher relationships, (4) community involvement, and (5) a classroom environment conducive to innovative techniques.

It seems to me what we have here is a difference in preference for educational life styles. If we can agree that the state has a legitimate concern for education for all students throughout the state and that there are some special concerns for students in small schools, then we can work on ways to ameliorate the problems and save the small school educational life style along with their recognized strengths.

In Minnesota for example, we have a state foundation aid formula that guarantees a minimum level of financial revenue to all districts if they levy a minimum local effort: i.e., $1,690.00 per elementary student and $2,366.00 per year per secondary student. Districts are also able to vote local discretionary funds to exceed that revenue. We provide some additional state funds for cooperative efforts including transportation costs for cooperation between districts.

We think this addresses the concern for inadequate financial support for small districts.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

My greatest concern is that all schools provide a minimum comprehensive program of courses for all students. The State Board has recently passed a rule requiring this minimum program which went into effect in the fall of 1985. Now all students, no matter the size of their district can be assured that they will be able to choose from courses that will enable them to compete in further post-secondary educational options. (I have enclosed a copy of this rule).

The point I am attempting to make is that we are not unaware of small school concerns. Small schools need to be encouraged to overcome their weaknesses and continue to build on their strengths.

The difficulty of promoting the cause of small schools lies in the fact that theirs is a limited constituency. Large schools in large metro areas represent a large number of voters - small schools in rural areas represent fewer voters. However, small school proponents possess a fervor and passion which must be recognized even though their references are made in subjective terms.

Jonathan Sher writes in Revitalizing Rural Education: "Much of what is unique about rural schools and school districts defies quantitative analysis or statistical description". It is my opinion that there is much agreement that small schools have inherent strengths and any attempt to solve the small school problems should capitalize on these strengths.

Sincerely,

Donald A. Johansen

Dr. Donald A. Johansen
Supervisor, Secondary Education

DAJ/clj

Attachment

APPENDIX C

MINNESOTA COURSE REQUIREMENTS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Minnesota Department of Education
Education Statistics Section

The following is updated information for the Rules of the State Board of Education publication. Insert after page 6.

3500.2010 REQUIRED CURRICULUM OFFERINGS FOR THREE-YEAR SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

Subpart 1. Required during grades 10-12 program. The subjects listed in subpart 2 are required to be offered to students in a secondary school having grades 10 to 12. Except for physical education, each of the listed subjects must be made available over the three-year period for the minimum number of clock hours shown in subpart 2. Physical education must be offered for a minimum of 60 clock hours in grade 10. One credit/hour is equal to 120 clock hours. The minimum requirements may be expressed in clock hours or credit/hours.

Subp. 2. Schedule.

Subjects	Minimum Clock Hours	Credit/Hours
Communication skills	480	4
Mathematics	360	3
Science	360	3
Social studies	360	3
One modern-classical language	240	2
Music	240	2
Visual arts	240	2
Industrial arts	120	1
Health	60	1/2
Physical education in grade 10	60	1/2
Electives, local district choice in five subject areas	1,200	10

Subp. 3. Required offerings without minimum hours. The programs in A and B must be offered to students. The number of clock hours to be devoted to each is up to the local school board. Satisfactory completion will be based on locally determined learner outcomes which are defined as knowledge, skills, or understandings that an individual student derives from a learning experience.

A. A school district must provide a career education program developed by involving parents or guardians and the community. The program must be designed to assist pupils in making career decisions including course selections.

B. A school district must provide an information technology program to meet individual student needs. Information technology includes such things as student learning about and with one or more of the following: computers, telecommunications, cable television, interactive video, film, low power television, satellite communications, and microwave communications. Information technology may be integrated with course content of other subject areas.

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3500.2110 REQUIRED CURRICULUM OFFERINGS FOR FOUR-YEAR SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

Subpart 1. Required during grades 9-12 program. The subjects listed in subpart 2 are required to be offered to students in a secondary school having grades 9 to 12. Except for physical education, each of the listed subjects must be made available over the four-year period for the minimum number of clock hours shown in subpart 2. Physical education must be offered for a minimum of 80 clock hours in grade 9, and 60 clock hours in grade 10. One credit/hour is equal to 120 clock hours. The minimum requirements may be expressed in clock hours or credit/hours.

Subp. 2. Schedule.

Subjects	Minimum Clock Hours	Credit/Hours
Communication skills	600	5
Mathematics	480	4
Science	480	4
Social studies	480	4
One modern-classical language	240	2
Music	240	2
Visual arts	240	2
Industrial arts	120	1
Health	60	1/2
Physical education		
in grade 9	80	2/3
in grade 10	60	1/2
Electives, local district choice in five subject areas	1,200	10

Subp. 3. Required offerings without minimum hours. The programs in A and B must be offered to students. The number of clock hours to be devoted to each is up to the local school board. Satisfactory completion will be based on locally determined learner outcomes which are defined as knowledge, skills, or understandings that an individual student derives from a learning experience.

A. A school district must provide a career education program developed by involving parents or guardians and the community. The program must be designed to assist pupils in making career decisions including course selections.

B. A school district must provide an information technology program to meet individual student needs. Information technology includes such things as student learning about and with one or more of the following: computers, telecommunications, cable television, interactive video, film, low power television, satellite communications, and microwave communications. Information technology may be integrated with course content of other subject areas.

L 1983 c 314 art 8 s 23

Effective 1985-86 school year

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ILLINOIS

There were 87,601 ACT-tested students (41,382 men and 46,219 women) in Illinois' 1985 high school graduating classes. According to Department of Education statistics, approximately 72% of Illinois graduates take the ACT Assessment.

ACT Scores

The ACT Composite score is obtained by adding the four ACT Assessment test scores (English, mathematics, social studies, and natural sciences) and dividing by four. Thus, it is an estimate of the student's educational development across these subject areas. The Composite score scale ranges from 1 to 36.

The average ACT Composite score earned by Illinois students graduating in 1985 was 18.9; this was higher than the 18.6 average Composite score earned by students nationwide. It was, however, lower than the 19.2 average Composite score earned by students in the Midwestern Region.* (Average scores of Illinois students were lower than those of Midwestern Region students on the Mathematics and Natural Sciences tests, but the two groups had similar average scores on the English and Social Studies tests.)

The average ACT Composite score of Illinois students has decreased by 1.8 points during the past fifteen years; it was 20.7 in 1969-70 and 18.9 in 1984-85. This compares with a national decrease in average ACT Composite score of 1.3 points during the same period, from 19.9 in 1969-70 to 18.6 in 1984-85. The average Illinois and national test scores in 1969-70 and 1984-85 appear below:

	English		Mathematics		Social Studies		Natural Science	
	69-70	84-85	69-70	84-85	69-70	84-85	69-70	84-85
Illinois	19.2	18.3	21.1	17.7	20.5	17.8	21.5	21.4
National	18.5	18.1	20.0	17.2	19.7	17.4	20.8	21.2
Difference	+0.7	+0.2	+1.1	+0.5	+0.8	+0.4	+0.7	+0.2

For state and national trends in ACT scores for other years, including 1975-76, which marked the "low point" for Composite scores nationally, see the trend tables and graphs included in this packet.

*The Midwestern Region includes the following states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, West Virginia, Wisconsin.

Self-Reported High School Grades

When students register for the ACT Assessment, they are asked to provide the last course grade that they received (prior to the senior year) in each of four subject areas: English, mathematics, social studies, and natural sciences. The average of these grades for Illinois students graduating in 1985 was 2.77 on a four-point scale, similar to the national average of 2.89 and to the Midwestern Region average of 2.88. (Average self-reported grades of Illinois students were similar to those of Midwestern Region students in all four subject areas.)

During the past fifteen years, the difference between the Illinois and national self-reported grade averages has remained relatively constant; in 1969-70 the Illinois average of 2.59 was similar to the national average of 2.64. Illinois and national averages, by subject, for 1969-70 and 1984-85 appear below:

	English		Mathematics		Social Studies		Natural Science	
	69-70	84-85	69-70	84-85	69-70	84-85	69-70	84-85
Illinois	2.71	2.83	2.34	2.60	2.75	2.90	2.55	2.79
National	2.77	2.96	2.37	2.71	2.84	3.06	2.60	2.89
Difference	-0.06	-0.13	-0.03	-0.11	-0.09	-0.16	-0.05	-0.10

For more detailed information about state and national trends in self-reported high school grades, see the trend tables and graphs included in this packet.

Student Satisfaction With Selected Aspects of High School

In Illinois, 62% of ACT-tested students graduating in 1985 reported that they were satisfied with their classroom instruction. This compares with a Midwestern Region satisfaction rate of 61% and a national satisfaction rate of 62%.

These students were similarly satisfied with the number and variety of courses offered; 61% of Illinois ACT-tested students were satisfied with this aspect of their high school, compared to 58% in the Midwestern Region and 56% of students nationwide.

The school guidance services were rated as satisfactory by 58% of Illinois ACT-tested students, 58% of Midwestern Region students, and 59% of students nationwide.

(For information on other aspects of student satisfaction, see Table 5.2 of the High School Profile Report.)

Trends in College Major Plans

Social and economic changes during the past decade appear to be reflected in the college major choices made by both men and women. In particular, national trends indicate a shift toward business and technical majors for both sexes. Women are choosing the "traditional" occupations of teaching and nursing less frequently than they did ten years ago. The following chart shows how changes in choices of selected educational majors made by Illinois students compare with those of ACT-tested students nationally.

Percentage of Group Choosing Certain Majors, by Year and Sex

Major by Year	Total		Men		Women	
	IL	Natl	IL	Natl	IL	Natl
Business, Commerce						
1974-75	15	14	16	14	15	15
1984-85	22	21	19	18	24	23
Computer/Information Science						
1974-75	02	02	03	03	02	02
1984-85	07	06	09	09	05	05
Education						
1974-75	11	11	06	07	15	16
1984-85	05	06	02	03	07	09
Engineering						
1974-75	06	06	12	13	01	01
1984-85	08	09	15	17	02	03
Health Professions						
1974-75	17	18	09	10	23	25
1984-85	14	15	07	08	19	20

Percentages for other majors and years can be found in the trend tables included in this packet.

Needs for Help

The percentages of ACT-tested students graduating in 1985 who expressed needs for help with educational/occupational planning and with selected academic concerns in Illinois, in the Midwestern Region, and in the nation are shown below. Overall, the percentages of students in Illinois expressing needs for help are simlar to those in the Midwestern Region and the nation.

	Illinois	Midwestern Region	Nation
Educational/Occupational Planning	51	50	50
Expressing Ideas in Writing	29	28	29
Reading/Comprehension	35	31	31
Study Skills	45	44	45
Math Skills	43	41	43

Special Subgroups

Included in your packet are tables summarizing ACT Assessment and self-reported high school grade information for the following special subgroups of Illinois 1985 graduates:

Graduating Class Size

Less than 25
25-99
100-199
200-399
400-599
600-899
900 or more

Racial-Ethnic Group

Afro-American/Black
American Indian/Alaskan Native
Caucasian
Mexican American/Chicano
Asian American/Pacific Islander
Puerto Rican/Cuban/Other Hispanic

High School Preparation

Core or more (minimum 4 years English, 3 years mathematics, 3 years natural sciences, 3 years social studies)
Less than core

Comparisons of the average ACT Assessment test and Composite scores for the state and nation appear on the following pages.

Reference Group	English	Math	Social Studies	Natural Sciences	Composite
American Indian/Alaskan Native					
Illinois	15.7	13.9	14.9	18.3	15.8
National	13.8	11.6	12.5	17.1	13.9
Difference	+1.9	+2.3	+2.4	+1.2	+1.9
White/Caucasian					
Illinois	19.3	19.1	19.0	22.5	20.1
National	18.8	18.0	18.2	22.0	19.4
Difference	+0.5	+1.1	+0.8	+0.5	+0.7
Mexican-American/Chicano					
Illinois	15.1	13.5	14.4	17.8	15.3
National	14.9	12.6	13.1	17.2	14.6
Difference	+0.2	+0.9	+1.3	+0.6	+0.7
Asian American/Pacific Islander					
Illinois	17.7	21.0	17.5	21.8	19.6
National	17.3	20.4	16.9	21.3	19.1
Difference	+0.4	+0.6	+0.6	+0.5	+0.5
Puerto Rican/Hispanic/Cuban					
Illinois	14.2	12.3	13.2	17.0	14.3
National	15.7	14.5	14.6	18.4	15.9
Difference	-1.5	-2.2	-1.4	-1.4	-1.6
Graduates With Core or More*					
Illinois	20.2	21.3	20.8	24.1	21.7
National	19.8	20.3	19.8	23.6	21.0
Difference	+0.4	+1.0	+1.0	+0.5	+0.7
Graduates With Less Than Core*					
Illinois	18.0	17.1	17.3	20.9	18.4
National	17.2	15.4	16.0	19.8	17.2
Difference	+0.8	+1.7	+1.3	+1.1	+1.2

*Core or more course work includes: 4 or more years of English, 3 or more years of mathematics, 3 or more years of Social Studies, 3 or more years of Natural Sciences.

Average ACT Scores

Reference Group	English	Math	Social Studies	Natural Sciences	Composite
1-24 graduates					
Illinois	17.3	14.9	16.1	20.1	17.2
National	17.0	14.6	15.5	19.8	16.8
Difference	+0.3	+0.3	+0.6	+0.3	+0.4
25-99 graduates					
Illinois	17.8	16.3	16.9	20.7	18.0
National	17.7	15.9	16.6	20.6	17.8
Difference	+0.1	+0.4	+0.3	+0.1	+0.2
100-199 graduates					
Illinois	17.8	16.5	17.0	20.6	18.1
National	17.8	16.5	17.0	20.8	18.1
Difference	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2	0.0
200-399 graduates					
Illinois	18.3	17.7	17.8	21.2	18.9
National	18.2	17.4	17.5	21.2	18.7
Difference	+0.1	+0.3	+0.3	0.0	+0.2
400-599 graduates					
Illinois	18.8	19.0	18.6	22.1	19.8
National	18.6	18.3	18.1	21.8	19.3
Difference	+0.2	+0.7	+0.5	+0.3	+0.5
600-899 graduates					
Illinois	19.1	19.5	19.0	22.4	20.2
National	18.7	18.7	18.3	21.9	19.5
Difference	+0.4	+0.8	+0.7	+0.5	+0.7
900+ graduates					
Illinois	18.4	18.9	18.5	21.8	19.5
National	17.3	16.9	16.9	20.7	18.1
Difference	+1.1	+2.0	+1.6	+1.1	+1.4
Black/Afro-American					
Illinois	13.3	9.8	11.6	15.2	12.6
National	13.3	9.9	11.2	14.9	12.5
Difference	0.0	-0.1	+0.4	+0.3	+0.1

APPENDIX E

SYNOPSIS OF SELECTED RESEARCH

This brief synopsis of selected research on School District Size and Consolidation is intended to supply individuals with factual data which is in direct opposition to that distributed by our State Board of Education.

If you have the time and energy for an exhaustive search of the literature on school size and its relation to effective schools, you will find that school size is not absolute -- it is but one of many factors related to educational quality. Likewise, school district organization patterns are not a predictor of student achievement. Good education can and does occur in school districts and school buildings of all sizes and organizational patterns.

Prepared by:

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Superintendent
Millstadt Consolidated
School District #160
211 West Mill
Millstadt, IL 62260
11/20/85

1. School District Organization and Student Dropout
Engelhard, George
April, 1980, American Educational Research Association

This study tested a theoretical framework that compared structural relationships and environmental variables and school district effectiveness. Data were obtained from 487 school districts. School district size, conceived as an environmental variable, was found to be a major determinant of organizational effectiveness. Dropout rate was higher in schools with higher ADA.

2. The Effects of Crowding on Human Behavior and Student Achievement in Secondary Schools
Cohen, Barbara
1975, Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Philadelphia Public Schools

This study shows teacher-student relationships and administrator behavior changing as school size increases. Shows decreased student involvement in extra-curricular activities as school size increases.

3. America's Small Schools
Schneider, Barbara
New Mexico State University, National Institute of Education
March, 1980

Literature compiled shows a growing dissatisfaction with the quality of education in large elementary and secondary schools has been a major factor in the rediscovering of the small school. Small schools are generally thought of as rural, but are found in all areas. The research indicated inability of small schools to: make quantity purchases, distribute administrative costs, and provide specialized programs. However, studies reviewed indicate the following benefits: 1) small school size has positive influence on student achievement; 2) students of small schools assume more responsible and important positions within a wider range of activities than do their large school counterparts; and 3) there is greater interaction, communication, and individual attention afforded small school students and teachers.

4. Differences Between Entering Freshmen from Different Size High Schools
Downey, Ronald
1978, Journal of College Student Personnel

No significant academic difference between large and small schools. Students from small schools were involved in a greater number of activities.

5. Small Schools Task Force Report
Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, MD

The task force concluded that school size is not the determining factor in the quality of a child's elementary school education. Other factors such as leadership of the principal, ability and dedication of staff, and community support and involvement may be more important factors.

6. Optimum School District Size: Research Analysis Series
Hickey, Michael
Oregon University, Office of Education, Bureau of Research

Conclusion of the report is the size must be viewed as a variable and not as an absolute factor. Situational variables are strong (scope of program, range of services, the community, administrative and instructional staff, economic base) and may profoundly influence size-quality relationship in a district.

This report also contains a discussion of Trends in reorganization as it relates to decentralization and community control.

7. Factors Affecting College Students' Achievement in Science
Mallinson, George
Western Michigan University, Office of Education, Bureau of Research

Success was not related to size of high school or the size of college attended. Student of the same IQ received substantially the same grades in one type of institute as they did in another. This study included 1,191 students from 12 midwestern high schools.

8. Economy of Scale in the Production of Selected Educational Outcomes
Alkin, Marvin
American Educational Research Association

This study reviewed 245 school districts and studied the relationships between size of school district and mean and median reading and math scores at the 5th grade level. This study controlled for socialeconomic characteristics of community and expenditure per ADA.

It was concluded that given the equivalent financial resources and comparable socialeconomic characteristics, there is no evidence that greater educational benefits are produced in larger school districts with elementary programs.

9. Dunne, Edith, Professor of Education, Dartmount

In a comprehensive survey conducted by Dunne she found: when people have a choice, people choose to keep their small schools. She also found the question of cost is tangled up with the struggle of wills between urban and rural cultures.

10. School Size: A Reassessment of the Small School
Eric Clearinghouse on Education Management,
National Institute of Education
1982

Great disagreement in the research about whether larger schools offer higher quality education. Studies suggest schools can be both too large and too small to be effective. The most reliable studies show that size makes no difference in academic achievement. Regardless of research findings, parents favor smaller schools. Research suggests this desire for small schools arise because of the presence of innovative involved teachers, supportive atmosphere, and closer connections between principal and staff.

11. Public School Organization and Community Development in Rural Areas
Kay, Steve
Kentucky State University, Cooperative State Research Service
1981

This study compared independent school districts and consolidated school districts. The differences in the functioning of the different systems appear to be facilities and size rather than organizational patterns. The independent system maintained excellent community relations and the consolidated districts generally lack strong community ties except at the elementary level. School organization is connected to economic conditions and school functioning is connected to governmental mandates.

12. A Review of Literature on Rural and/or Small Schools
O'Neal, Linda
1980

Various researchers write that school consolidation has had its strengths exaggerated, weaknesses ignored, and overall merits for educational reform seriously oversold. In 14 recent major consolidation studies, not one records a consistent, positive correlation between size of school and academic achievement.

13. Basic Quality of Secondary Education in Rural Montana
Kimble, John, Montana State University
1976

This research analyzed whether or not school size is important in determining student achievement and analysis factors that affect student achievement and whether those factors vary by school size.

The results indicated that, at the senior level, no significant differences existed in the mean test scores on school size. This research included 2,186 students.

14. School District Reorganization: A Review of Selected Studies
University of Minnesota, Educational Cooperative Services Unit
1977

This report concludes that reorganization of school districts is not a panacea for educational problems.

15. A Study to Determine the Influence of Certain Non-Cognitive Factors on Achievement of Freshmen Students Enrolled in A Predominantly Black State Supported College
Powell, Christus, Negro Education Review, 1981

This research found no statistically significant relationship between school size and grade point average.

16. Research Findings on K - 12 Rural School Districts in the United States
Barber and Muse
Brigham Young University, 1983

This study gathered comparative data between districts of 300 students or less and those between 301 - 900 students. The major differences noted include: student performance on the ACT Exam was significantly higher in the small districts.

17. Dr. A.N. Hieronymus, Director of the Iowa Basic Skills Testing Program

August 30, 1985

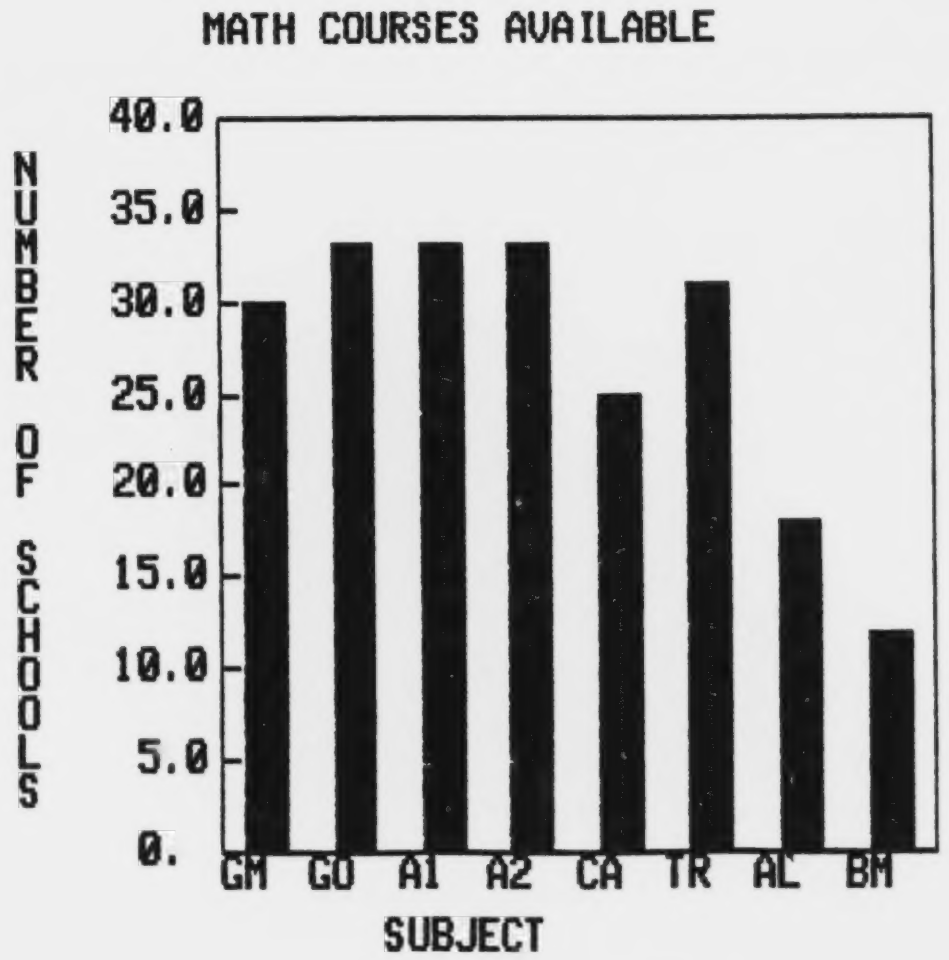
"This past year was the 50th anniversary of the Iowa Basic Skills Testing Program." Sometime around 1965 separate norms for different size schools were discontinued because there were no significant differences.

In late July of 1985, a six year analysis of achievement for 433 Iowa schools of various sizes concluded, "it is not size as such that makes the difference, but the quality of the program in schools of any size."

18. Economy, Efficiency, and Equality: The Myths of Rural School and District Consolidation
Sher, Jonothen, National Institute of Education
U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare, 1976

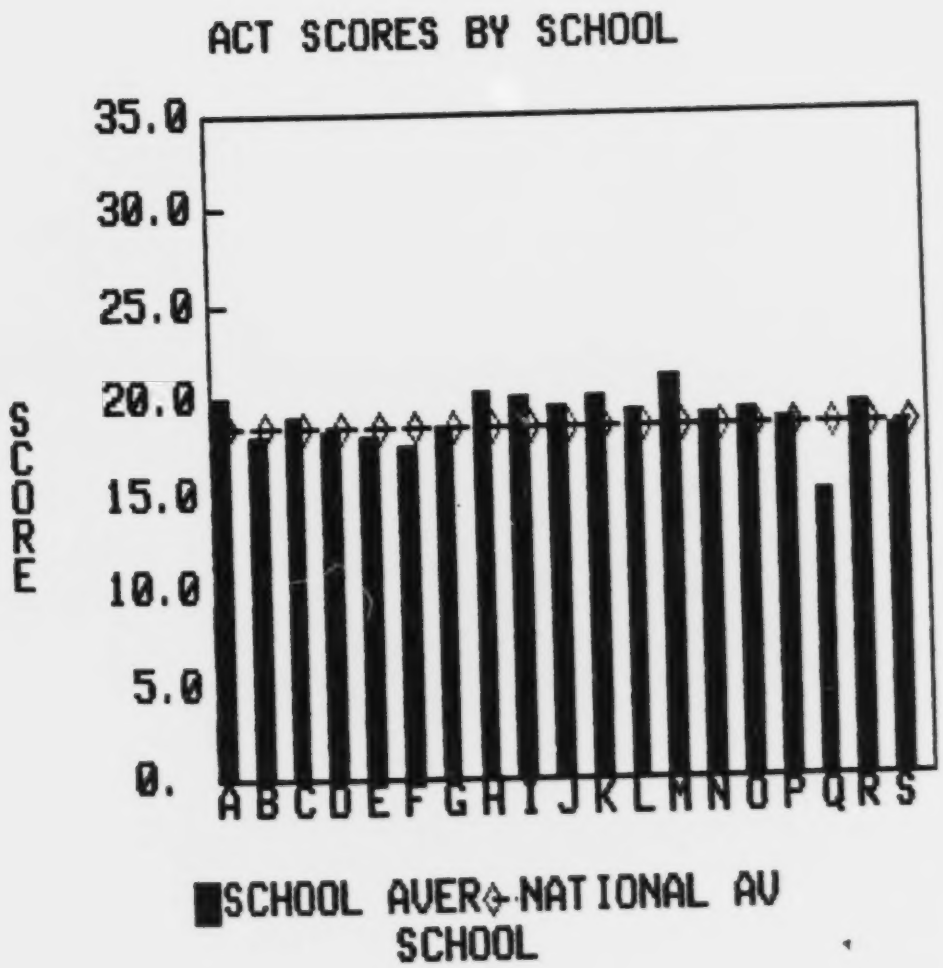
"By consolidating, rural communities relinquish the advantages of smallness and receive little in return." "While the policy of rural school and district consolidation is not totally devoid of worth, its strengths were greatly exaggerated, its weaknesses often ignored, and its overall merits as a strategy for educational reform and improvement grievously overstated and oversold!"

TABLE 2.0



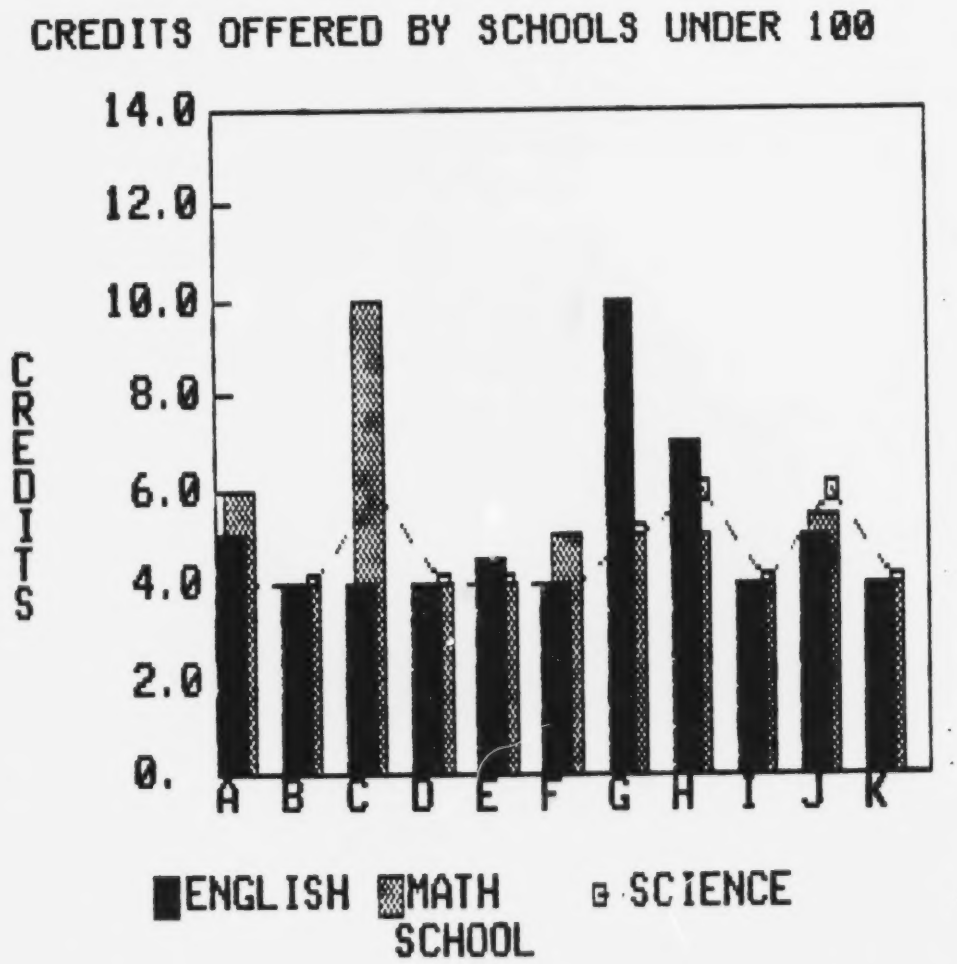
The following symbols represent mathematics courses of the 34 participating schools: GM = General Math, GO = Geometry, A1 = Algebra 1, A2 = Algebra 2, CA = Calculus, TR = Trigonometry, AL = Analytic Geometry or Analysis, and BM = Business Math.

TABLE 2.1



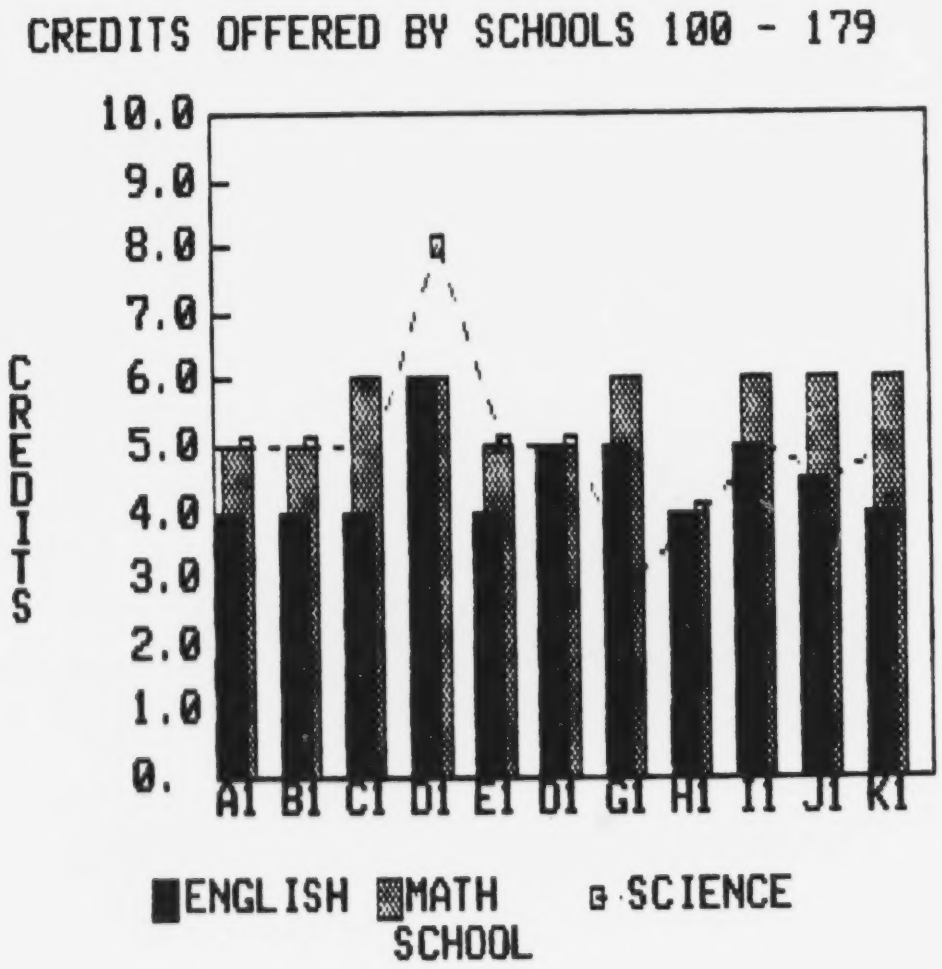
The ACT scores reported by the participating schools represent a five year average. The National Average during the 1984-85 year was 18.6. Students from Illinois had a Composite Average during the same year of 18.9.

TABLE 3.0



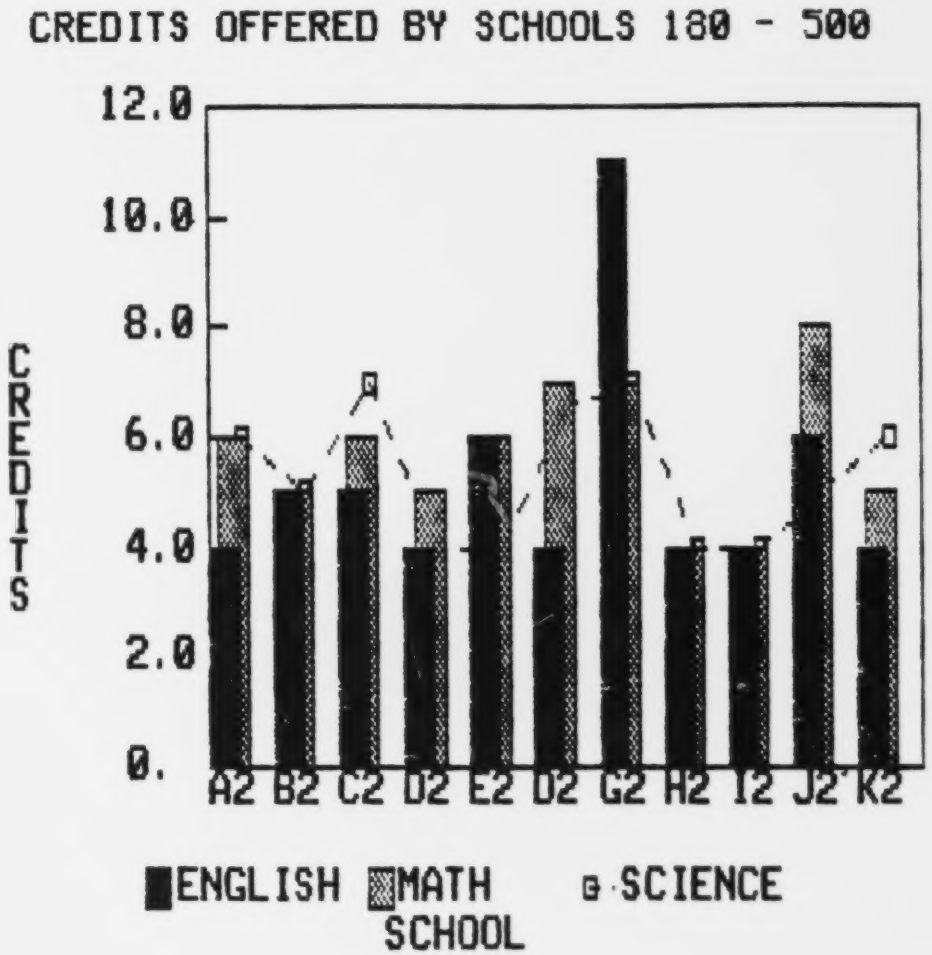
High schools with under 100 enrollment offer more academic courses than the state mandates. All schools have a curriculum that provides at least 4 years of English, Mathematics and Science instruction.

TABLE 3.1



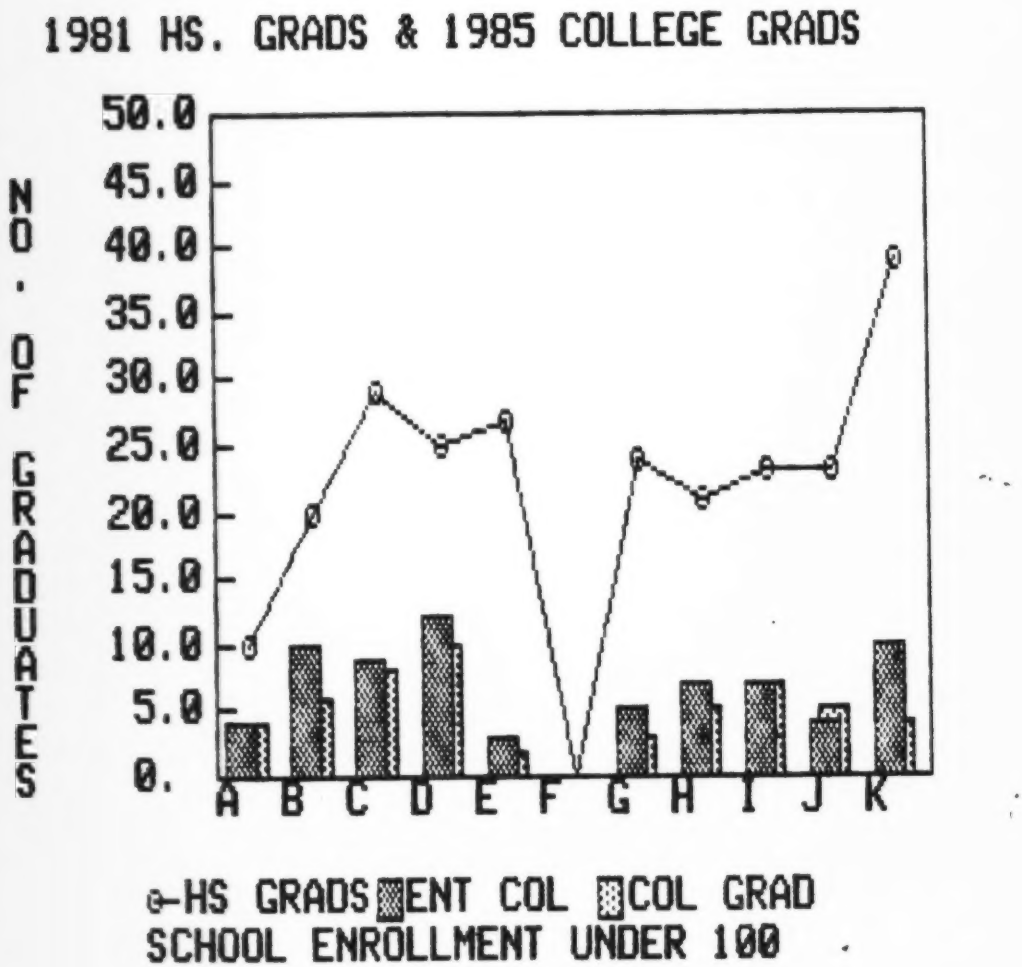
High schools with an enrollment between 100 and 179 offer more academic courses than the state mandates. All schools have a curriculum that provides at least 4 years of English, Mathematics and Science instruction.

TABLE 3.2



High schools with an enrollment over 180 offer more academic courses than the state mandates. All schools have a curriculum that provides at least 4 years of English, Mathematics and Science instruction.

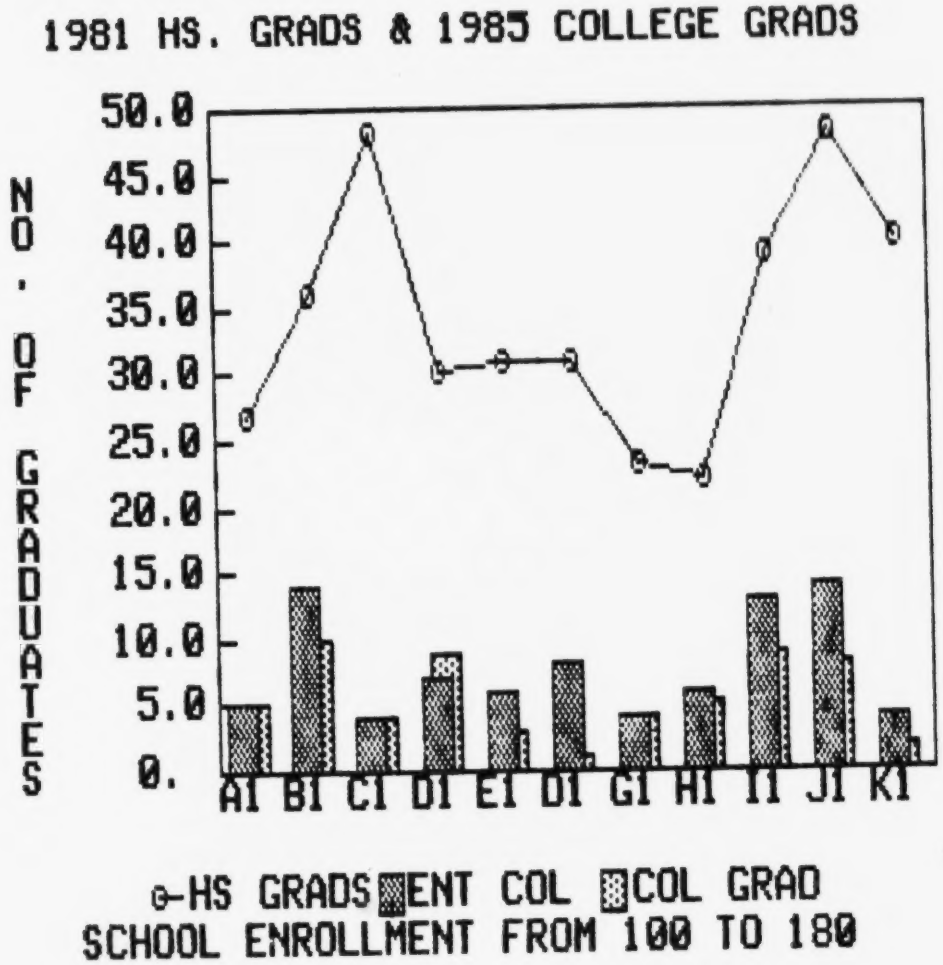
TABLE 4.0



High schools with an enrollment under 100 sent approximately 29.4% of the 1981 graduating class to a four year college or university. Approximately 76% completed their four years of study.

These schools also sent approximately 20.3% of the 1981 graduates to a community college.

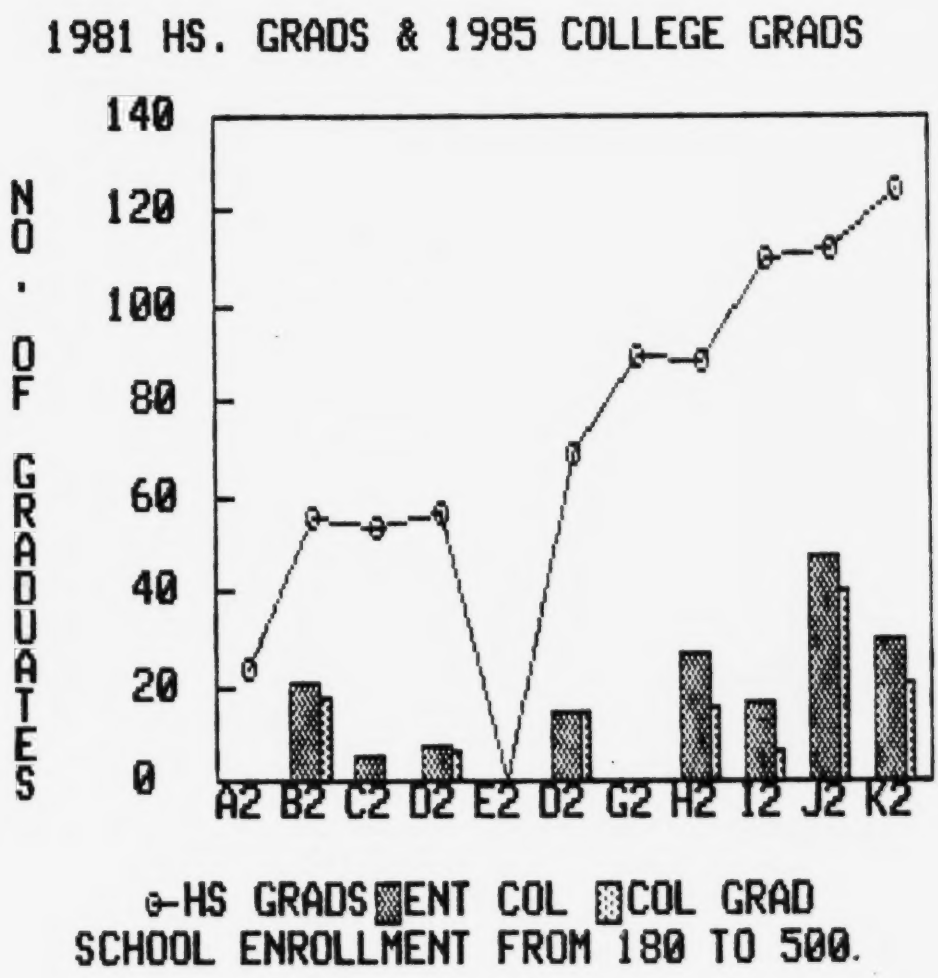
TABLE 4.1



High schools with an enrollment between 100 and 180 sent approximately 23.4% of the 1981 graduating class to a four year college or university. Approximately 68% completed their four years of study.

These schools also sent approximately 18.4% of the 1981 graduates to a community college.

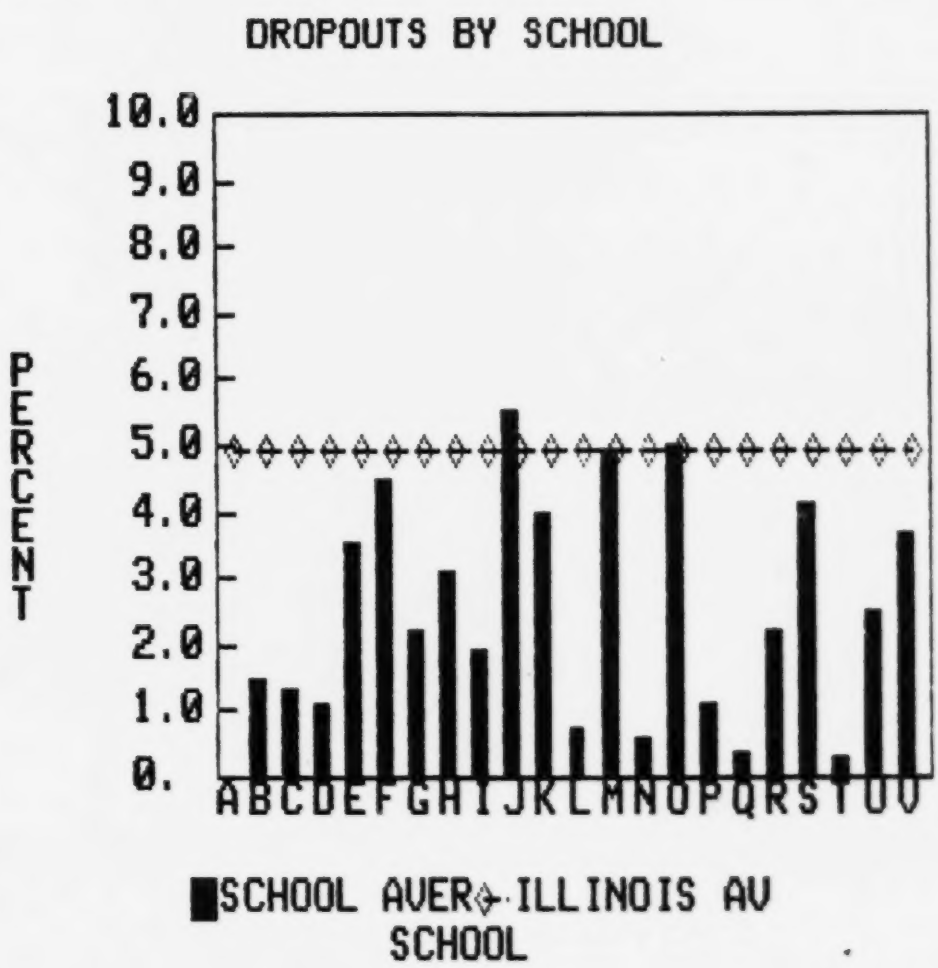
TABLE 4.2



High schools with an enrollment over 180 sent approximately 21.7% of the 1981 graduating class to a four year college or university. Approximately 78.4% completed their four years of study.

These schools also sent approximately 14.1% of the 1981 graduates to a community college.

TABLE 5.0



According to the Illinois State Board of Education, the average dropout rate for Illinois Schools was 4.9 percent during the 1984-85 school year. Most schools particpating in this report have a dropout rate far below the state average.